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Report of the Executive Board of the United Nations Children's Fund on the work of its 2003 annual session*

(2-6 and 9 June)

* The present document is an advance version of the report of the Executive Board of the United Nations Children's Fund on its annual session (2-6 and 9 June 2003). The report on the first regular session (13-16 January 2003) was issued as part I, and the report on the second regular session (15-19 September 2003) will be issued as part III. These reports will be combined with the report on the extraordinary budget session (1 and 2 December 2003) and issued in final form as *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2003, Supplement No. 14* (E/2003/34/Rev.1-E/ICEF/2003/9/Rev.1).

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I. Organization of the session

A. Opening of the session

1. The President of the Executive Board remarked that since the January session, he had the opportunity to follow UNICEF activities more closely, with the assistance of the Executive Director and many secretariat colleagues, in particular the Secretary of Executive Board. He was still impressed by the quality of the work and motivation of UNICEF staff. He said that the Bureau had met once a month to review the activities of the secretariat and to prepare for the present session.

2. On his two trips to Latin America, he was able to observe the esteem that UNICEF enjoyed with the local populations for whom it worked as well as from the Governments and administrations of the countries concerned. He also noted the commitment and response of the administration to the challenges in different parts of the world, adding that the role of the Executive Board was to support those efforts by carrying out responsibilities according to its mandate.

3. The President addressed some of the highlights of the session. The Board would be considering, for the first time, 13 country programme documents (CPDs) based on the new harmonized approval procedure. In that connection, he pointed out that the major efforts currently under way in the area of simplifying and harmonizing practices and procedures among the agencies of the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) (UNICEF, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the World Food Programme (WFP) aimed at achieving greater efficiency in the field.

4. In welcoming participants to the session, the Executive Director informed the Board that the Deputy Executive Director, Ms. Karin Sham Poo, was unable to attend the session because of an unfortunate fall, and she knew the Board would join her in wishing the Deputy Executive Director a speedy recovery.

5. The international landscape, she said, was being repeatedly reshaped, with a growing consensus that the world was a more dangerous place, and she provided some clear examples, including UNICEF and donor support for some activities in Iraq. She stressed that the job of ensuring child rights in Africa remained the most formidable mandate of UNICEF.

6. Among the agenda items, she noted the update on the UNICEF recovery policy, which would summarize the generally positive reactions received from regional groups, National Committees for UNICEF and numerous bilateral consultations. She also drew attention to the 13 CPDs, which required Board approval of the aggregate indicative budgets. The Executive Director also noted that the essence of UNICEF and its work with children had been brought into sharper focus as a result of the ongoing branding exercise directed by the Division of Communication. In conclusion, she said that UNICEF remained what its founders intended — "a moral force for children the world over", with its focus on "the well-being of the whole child". (The full text of her statement is contained in document E/ICEF/2003/CRP.7.)

B. Adoption of the agenda

7. The provisional agenda and proposed timetable and organization of work of the session (E/ICEF/2003/10 and Corr.1) was introduced by the Secretary of the Executive Board. He noted several changes endorsed by the Bureau in the ordering of some of the agenda items, as well as the postponement of the oral report on UNICEF collaboration with the corporate sector until the second regular session in September 2003.

8. One delegation drew the attention of the secretariat to difficulties encountered in getting some of the documents, as well as in the late receipt of the annexes to the Executive Director's annual report (E/ICEF/2003/4 (Part II)). While expressing appreciation for the oral reports, the same speaker requested the secretariat to provide brief summaries of each presentation so that they could be shared with colleagues in capitals to facilitate their preparation for the session.

9. The agenda, as amended orally, was adopted by the Executive Board.

10. In accordance with rule 50.2 and the annex of the rules of procedure, the Secretary of the Executive Board announced that 63 observer delegations had submitted credentials for the session. In addition, 2 United Nations bodies, 1 specialized agency, 4 intergovernmental organizations, 12 National Committees for UNICEF and Palestine had also submitted credentials.

II. Deliberations of the Executive Board

A. Report of the Executive Director (part II)

11. The Executive Board had before it the annual report of the Executive Director (E/ICEF/2003/4 (Part II)), which was introduced by the Executive Director. Many delegations said that the report comprehensive, clear and more focused on results than in the past. Support was also expressed for the human rights-based approach that was evident in the report, and for the linkages provided with the Millennium Agenda, *A World Fit for Children* and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Speakers in general agreed that the five priorities and associated targets of the medium-term strategic plan (MTSP) provided a clearer and more focused framework for UNICEF organizational reporting than in the past.

12. Several speakers cited the strengthened UNICEF performance in the area of child protection, including in conflict situations, but agreed that future improvements were needed, including a stronger emphasis on promoting the rights of children with disabilities and preventing discrimination against them. The "back to school" strategy, the initiative to accelerate efforts in key countries for girls' education, vaccine procurement and security, the linkage of emergencies to rehabilitation and the focus on the family were also commended. At the same time, UNICEF was encouraged to maintain a systematic approach to capacity-building in all five priority areas.

13. It was recognized that the secretariat, as well as many donors, were in the process of gaining experience in the assessment and reporting of results. Speakers hoped for further improvements in the results orientation of the report as the MTSP period progressed, especially in terms of reporting on outcome and impact. Several delegations indicated that the question of the attribution of results was less important than good reporting on achievements themselves. A clear analysis of the

partnerships that contribute to specific results was also seen as important, and several speakers noted improvements in the report's discussion of the relationship between the MTSP priorities and development frameworks such as sector-wide approaches (SWAps) and poverty reduction strategies. However, it was said that, in future, the report should provide further analysis of the UNICEF role within partnership frameworks. The Executive Director agreed that UNICEF should continue its efforts to improve reporting on partnerships and impact. She also indicated that UNICEF was now assessing the extent to which poverty reduction strategies were adequately focusing on children.

14. While commending the report's frank analysis of development challenges and of specific weaknesses in UNICEF performance, some delegations urged the secretariat to further strengthen the report's analytical content. A few speakers also suggested that future reports focus more in depth on selected topics, or more explicitly incorporate the results of detailed thematic evaluations. In that context, the five thematic reports on the MTSP priorities, although circulated only shortly before the session, were seen to provide valuable additional information.

15. One speaker questioned the extent of the focus in some sections of the report on UNICEF support to national policy development and advocacy. Other delegations, however, expressed appreciation for the role being played by UNICEF in support of national policies, including in the leveraging of resources for children and at the local government level. The Executive Director stressed that this area of cooperation often involved the inter-country exchange of development experience relating to children, which UNICEF was in a good position to facilitate. Advocacy for the adoption of agreed international standards was also an important role of the organization and consistent with the Secretary-General's approach to the human rights focus of the United Nations.

16. In view of the overwhelming nature of the AIDS crisis, there was substantial discussion on the effectiveness of coordination among the co-sponsors of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and of the United Nations country theme groups on HIV/AIDS. The Executive Director said that while the challenge posed by HIV/AIDS to all development partners and the need for additional resources were still enormous, the work of partners in this area had improved significantly. The pilot projects for the prevention of vertical transmission of HIV had been evaluated recently, and the evaluation findings would provide a basis for scaling up these efforts. UNICEF would also give high priority to supporting the expansion of interventions to benefit orphaned children and would continue to strongly support exclusive breastfeeding.

17. It was agreed that, in future, the report would provide a breakdown of expenditures by regular and other resources on each MTSP priority. Other suggestions included the review of some of the MTSP targets in order to fine-tune them, and the incorporation of selected performance indicators. Some speakers also called for more systematic attention in the report to the question of gender equality. The Executive Director provided examples of promising intersectoral approaches, such as hygiene, sanitation and HIV prevention education in schools, and of the impact on UNICEF cooperation of the human rights-based approach.

18. In response to questions raised about joint programming, the Executive Director stressed that there have already been promising results from such arrangements (e.g., in working with the World Health Organization (WHO) and others on Immunization "plus"). Much of the value added by these arrangements arose where there was high-quality assessment and programming, with Governments

taking the lead, and not always necessarily in terms of pooling of funds. Experience with joint programming was still evolving, and good practices would be identified and shared.

19. A number of delegations noted favourably the increase in UNICEF income in 2002 due not only to a one-time legacy and exchange rate gains, but also to an increase in private sector contributions. The balance between regular and other resources income had improved slightly, and delegations hoped that the trend would be accelerated. The Executive Director stressed that regular resources remained the most desirable option as they strengthened the core capacity of UNICEF to support medium- and long-term needs at the country level. To supplement these resources, thematic funding that did not impose high transaction costs was emerging as the next best option, and the new recovery policy would provide incentives for donors interested in such funding modalities.

20. Asked about the reason for the decline in other resources income from private sector sources for emergencies, the Executive Director stressed that the private sector had been a key contributor to the overall improvement in income in 2002 and that the National Committees were working closely with UNICEF in its drive to meet the MTSP funding targets, which included increased contributions in the regular resources segment of income.

B. Draft country programme documents

Introduction

21. The Director, Programme Division, provided a brief overview of the 13 draft CPDs being presented for review. The CPD format was being introduced for the first time as part of the simplification and harmonization effort involving UNDP, UNFPA, WFP and UNICEF as the four Executive Committee agency members of UNDG. In addition, five of the country programmes (Benin, Ecuador, Kenya, Niger and Pakistan) had been prepared under a process of harmonization and simplification of the approval processes of the Executive Committee of UNDG as initiated in 2002. The UNICEF country programmes were developed on the basis of the Common Country Assessment/United Nations Development Assistance Framework (CCA/UNDAF), which highlighted the Millennium Development Goals as the overall measures of national development and the importance of a human rights-based approach to programming. He added that the UNDAF matrix, which aimed at facilitating better and increased programme impact, would be added to the revised CPDs and posted on the UNICEF Extranet in October 2003. The Director noted that there had been greater participation of other partners and agencies in the preparation process of the draft country programmes of cooperation, as well as greater awareness of areas for programme collaboration and joint programming among the funds and programmes.

Eastern and Southern Africa

22. The Executive Board had before it the draft CPDs for two full-length country programmes, for Kenya and Somalia (E/ICEF/2003/P/L.2 and E/ICEF/2003/P/L.4, respectively), and for two one-year extension programmes, for Angola and Madagascar (E/ICEF/2003/P/L.1 and E/ICEF/2003/P/L.3, respectively), to harmonize with the next programme cycles of United Nations agencies, which were introduced by the Regional Director. He recalled that the region continued to be plagued by drought, deepening poverty and an increasingly devastating HIV/AIDS

pandemic. On the fight against HIV/AIDS, he suggested the following: that all orphans should be registered; that condoms should be made available and accessible to everyone to help reduce HIV infections; that some form of compulsory testing and partner identification was necessary to protect HIV-negative spouses; and that male circumcision should be promoted as there was ample evidence that it might reduce HIV infections.

23. On the draft CPD for **Angola**, the country delegation thanked UNICEF for its outstanding work in his country, noting in particular the successful polio and measles campaigns. Referring to paragraph 3 of the CPD, he explained that war and debt burden had prevented the Government from investing sufficient resources in the social sectors, and that the situation should not prevent donors from responding to the needs of children in Angola. One speaker commended the progress made in the area of routine immunization and United Nations coordination. She raised the issue of transition from humanitarian interventions to development programmes, to which the Regional Director responded that both needed to be implemented simultaneously. In response to a question about birth registration, the Regional Director explained that all children less than 18 years old were targeted. Another delegation stressed the need to address the situation of child soldiers and mines victims. The Regional Director responded that UNICEF had been involved in this issue, and that it would be reflected in the final programme document.

24. One delegation informed that the programme preparation process for the draft **Kenya** CPD was highly participatory, involving all bilateral and multilateral partners, and encouraged UNICEF to continue this good practice. She also suggested that the programme should be less fragmented, should focus on policy support, and should include child protection strategies and activities. Another delegation suggested that integrated early childhood development (IECD) be given the highest priority, with parent education and community participation as important components.

25. Commenting on the draft CPD for **Madagascar**, one speaker said that the programme goals were too ambitious. The Regional Director replied that the final document would make an effort to set goals that were more realistic.

26. On the draft **Somalia** CPD, the country delegation suggested that a disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme should be considered in view of the high number of children enrolled by militia groups. He also stressed the need for capacity-building of national institutions. The Regional Director responded that capacity-building activities were developed at the community level, which was particularly relevant to the Somalia context. Two speakers expressed their support for the strategy focusing on training a pool of human resources before investing in services. They also commended the inclusion of HIV/AIDS prevention activities while the prevalence was still low.

27. The Executive Board approved the aggregate indicative budgets of the draft CPDs (see chapter III, decision 2003/6).

West and Central Africa

28. The Executive Board had before it the draft CPDs for Benin, Congo, Niger and Sierra Leone (E/ICEF/2003/P/L.5-E/ICEF/2003/P/L.8, respectively), which were introduced by the Regional Director. She said that the four programmes had been prepared through participatory processes established by the respective Governments, which had included civil society and children. The CPDs emphasized the

relationship between the UNICEF country programmes and the UNDAFs, particularly those for Benin and Niger, which were pilot cases for harmonizing the programming processes of the UNDG members.

29. Commenting on the draft CPD for **Benin**, the representative of the country focused on child trafficking and the eradication of female genital mutilation (FGM), saying that the Government had recently adopted additional reinforcement laws which were to be followed by drastic measures to eliminate these child rights violations. Other speakers also commented on child labour and child trafficking, highlighting the need to work with such partners as the International Labour Organization, the European Union and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Some delegations noted the strong consultative process during programme preparation and the relationship between the UNDAF and the proposed programme priorities. Asked how the most vulnerable rural population would benefit from the programme interventions, the Regional Director said that as indicated in paragraph 31 of the CPD, the north, which was the most vulnerable region, would be the focus of programme activities, and that UNICEF Benin intended to open a sub-office in Parakou town.

30. On the draft CPD for the **Congo**, speakers suggested that because there were few international partners present in the country, which affected resource mobilization, UNICEF should prepare a strong communication plan and improve reporting activities. The Regional Director said that there was a regional fund-raising strategy to assist countries that were short of funds, and that some positive results had been achieved. Another speaker said that the rights-based approach could be reinforced in the CPD so as to highlight the child protection component of the country programme.

31. Commenting on the draft CPD for **Niger**, a few speakers saw the new partnership with traditional chiefs in the area of education as an innovative strategy, with great potential to increase access and improve the quality of education. It was suggested that the revised CPD make more explicit the linkage between the proposed education programme and the national education sector plan supported by bilateral donors. One speaker said that the proposed country programme clearly had been designed within the UNDAF and wanted to know about the mechanism envisaged for monitoring progress. The Regional Director said that ChildInfo would be used for that purpose. Asked how the new programme would promote the rights of women, the Regional Director said that Niger had ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women last year and that UNICEF would support the Government in its implementation, as it had done in supporting the ratification itself.

32. On the draft **Sierra Leone** CPD, the representative of the country stressed the national ownership of the new programme. He said that because the country was in a transition from conflict to rehabilitation, such vital sectors as health, education and justice, all of which had a direct impact on children's welfare, required attention. Other speakers highlighted the importance of focusing programmatic interventions in child protection through an integrated approach, and also supported the proposed strategy for community capacity-building within the context of the national recovery programme and the poverty reduction strategy. One delegation suggested that the revised CPD mention the regional dimension context.

33. The Executive Board approved the aggregate indicative budgets of the draft CPDs (see chapter III, decision 2003/6).

The Americas and the Caribbean

34. The Executive Board had before it the draft CPD for **Ecuador** (E/ICEF/2003/P/L.9), which was introduced by the Regional Director. Delegations welcomed the rights-based approach of the draft country programme, including UNICEF support for the country's Child and Adolescent Code and child rights "observatory". The Regional Director agreed with the importance of the new Code and the "observatory", and emphasized the challenge of institutional reform for the effective protection of children, especially indigenous and afro-Ecuadorian children. Delegations suggested that the programme also take into account external factors contributing to poverty, such as the negative trade impact of agricultural subsidies in developed countries and migration. The Regional Director acknowledged the importance of external factors, and emphasized the effective measures taken by the former and current Governments to address their effects on children and adolescents. He referred to a 2001 study on migration, which found that the income benefits were often obtained at the cost of family separation, notably of mothers from their children. In response to questions about the extent to which the Government and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) had been involved in preparing the CCA/UNDAF, he said that both the Government and civil society had participated in the process and in drafting the UNICEF country programme, which reflected jointly identified priority areas. In response to a query, the Regional Director said that Ecuador was increasing immunization coverage and that IECD efforts were still at an early stage. The Executive Board approved the aggregate indicative budget of the draft CPD (see chapter III, decision 2003/6).

East Asia and the Pacific

35. The Executive Board had before it draft CPDs for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Philippines (E/ICEF/2003/P/L.10 and E/ICEF/2003/P/L.11, respectively), which were introduced by the Regional Director. She said that while the bulk of external assistance for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea was humanitarian, more needed to be done in the areas of health and nutrition. Regarding the Philippines, she explained that the draft country programme was a one-year extension of the current programme to harmonize with the programme cycles of UNDP and UNFPA, as well as with the government's medium-term development plan. The next five-year programme would be based on a joint planning process among United Nations agencies, involving a second-generation CCA and UNDAF.

36. The Regional Director also reported briefly on the recent Ministerial Consultation held in Bali as follow-up to the Special Session on Children. The meeting resulted in the "Bali Consensus", which underscored the importance of education, while also focusing on the reduction of child malnutrition and maternal mortality, the growing threats of HIV/AIDS, and trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation of children.

37. Commenting on the draft CPD for the **Democratic People's Republic of Korea**, one speaker expressed strong support for UNICEF efforts in meeting the immediate humanitarian needs of Korean children as well as longer-term survival, growth and development. She noted encouraging improvements in nutrition, but indicated that further efforts were needed. She suggested that more attention should be given to monitoring and evaluation, and that there should be increased focus on women's health, as little progress had been made. The same speaker also expressed the hope that more tangible results would be reflected in future reports. The

Regional Director assured the speaker that women's issues were of primary concern to UNICEF, especially in view of the nutrition survey which indicated that one third of women were anaemic. She added that children's nutrition levels were inextricably linked to women's nutrition, education and the care they provided to children, and welcomed a future opportunity to discuss the issue of how women's status impacted directly on the realization of the rights of children.

38. Serious concerns were raised about abductions nuclear issues. The same delegation also expressed concern regarding the delivery of humanitarian goods within the country, stressing that humanitarian agencies should be granted free and unhindered access to those in need. The Regional Director assured delegations that UNICEF was monitoring the storage and delivery of supplies in a systematic manner.

39. The country delegation thanked the Regional Director and other speakers who expressed support for the programme, stressing the priority his country gave to children and their rights. He mentioned that the nutritional survey conducted last year revealed improvements in the nutritional situation of children thanks to UNICEF and the international community.

40. Addressing the draft CPD for the **Philippines**, the country delegation attributed improvement in child survival and development to the strengthened capacity of local government units to manage basic services, innovations adopted by the Philippine justice systems to protect abused children, intensified partnerships between the Government and civil society, and successful private sector fund-raising. He noted issues for improving the CPD in the area of child protection, which the Regional Director said would be included in the final CPD. The same speaker also described the recently signed Anti-trafficking in Persons Act of 2003, which aimed at ensuring a safe environment for women and children. The Regional Director commended the Government's systematic way in implementing the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

41. In expressing general satisfaction with the UNICEF programme in the Philippines, including the UNDAF, another delegation encouraged continuation of the organization's strong collaborative relationships with other agencies such as USAID, WHO and the Asian Development Bank. The delegation welcomed the proposed efforts to strengthen monitoring and evaluation, and also urged UNICEF to give increased attention to improved financial reporting, especially on an annual basis.

42. Another delegation commended the focus in the draft CPD on juvenile justice, and encouraged continued efforts in this regard, in collaboration with the Government. He suggested that the country programme should have clearer links among the priorities and activities spelled out in the programme, as well as reference to activities and policy trends of the Government. The Regional Director indicated that this would be clarified in the final document.

43. The Executive Board approved the aggregate indicative budgets of the draft CPDs (see chapter III, decision 2003/6).

South Asia

44. The Executive Board had before it the draft CPD for **Pakistan** (E/ICEF/2003/P/L.12), which was introduced by the Regional Director. He said that it was one of the five pilot countries in 2003 from which lessons could be learned from the United Nations reform process, specifically in the preparation in the

CCA/UNDAF. The programme emphasized the value of partnerships and was anchored to the National Three-Year Plan as well as to the Millennium Development Goals, *A World Fit for Children* and the MTSP targets. It also had important links to the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs). The Regional Director also highlighted some of salient developments in the region since the last Board session.

45. One delegation requested more details on how the country programme related to the UNDAF, specifically the logical link with the results matrices. The Regional Director recalled that UNICEF had participated in the design of the draft UNDAF, and ensured that the four priority areas of participatory governance, poverty alleviation, health and education constituted the framework of the UNICEF draft country programme. The same delegation acknowledged the comparative advantage of UNICEF in advocating for water resources management at federal and provincial levels, but said that this should be the role of other agencies or perhaps of bilateral donors. The Regional Director stressed the importance of supporting water points and sanitary latrines in primary school to encourage parents to send their children to school, adding that UNICEF was working closely with the United Kingdom Department for International Development, OXFAM and UNDP in this area.

46. Another speaker said that the final document should contain assurances that UNICEF initiatives were institutionalized, with a view to ensuring sustainability. On the issue of ownership and sustainability, along with the importance of scaling up, the Regional Director said that advocacy was a very important tool, and UNICEF would seek to continue to influence policy development, resource allocation and work of a decentralized nature as it interacted with partners at provincial and federal levels.

47. Several delegations praised the pivotal role of UNICEF in coordinating good relationships among donors, United Nations agencies and the Government of Pakistan, and encouraged the organization to continue to foster strong collaborative relationships. One delegation said that the roles between UNICEF and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) needed to be clarified. In response, the Executive Director remarked that interaction between the two organizations had been increasing, as shown during the recent high-level consultation on Education for All for South Asia, organized jointly by UNICEF and UNESCO. On girls' education, one speaker noted that UNICEF had been particularly responsive regarding the development of the new phase of the Balochistan girls' primary school education project. However, it was felt that improvements were needed in monitoring and evaluation. The Regional Director replied that efforts would be made to address the delays in reporting, and that phase II of the project included monitoring and evaluation activities in the funding proposal. Another speaker praised the multisectoral efforts to reduce gender disparities in school enrolment and supported UNICEF efforts to mobilize community support for girls' education through the provision of information and a safe school environment. One delegation expressed the view that well-designed programmes for building family and community capacity, as well as parent education, could indeed improve maternal and child health and alleviate poverty.

48. A speaker wondered how the programme would tie in with government processes as well as with other donor programmes in order to achieve the ambitious targets spelled in the CPD. The country delegation confirmed that the draft country programme had been prepared after due consultations with all national partners, and that its main components reflected and complemented national priorities. He stated that the Government of Pakistan intended to implement the country programme in

partnership with NGOs, the private sector, communities and schoolchildren. The Regional Director assured delegations that all comments would be taken into account in the final CPD.

49. In response to a request for details regarding the specific activities in **Sri Lanka** aimed at bringing about the return of child soldiers to school, the Regional Director emphasized the importance for UNICEF, as monitor of the demobilization of child soldiers, to seek modalities to ensure that such children were reintegrated into their communities. In that regard, UNICEF was considering the model of foster parents, and about 3,000 of them would be needed. There was an environment propitious for the integration of these children back into society with the full involvement of the communities.

50. The Executive Board approved the aggregate indicative budget of the draft CPD (see chapter III, decision 2003/6).

Middle East and North Africa

51. The Executive Board had before it the draft CPD for **Palestinian children and women in Jordan, Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic and the Occupied Palestinian Territory** (E/ICEF/2003/P/L.13), which was introduced by the Regional Director. Speakers welcomed the relevance of the proposed programme to Palestinian priorities, especially in the areas of education; psychosocial health; the protection of children against violence; improved access, services and information for the most vulnerable children; and the active participation of adolescents. Several delegations highlighted the need for increased and sustained immunization coverage rates, and improved access to quality health services, early childhood care and education facilities. Some delegations expressed concern about the deterioration of living conditions in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and the restricted movement and access of humanitarian organizations that had hampered the work of UNICEF and other agencies.

52. A number of delegations highlighted the importance of maintaining a proper balance between short-term emergency humanitarian interventions and the longer-term programme support. Others raised questions about the programme's two-year duration, the links between the four distinct programmes, and whether the Palestinian Authority and civil society were able to respond to the programme goals and objectives in such a short period of time. Delegations also requested more up-to-date basic data. The Regional Director replied that the two-year programme would allow UNICEF to adjust to the fast-changing political environment and allow for the preparation of a more normal programme format in the next programme cycle. He added that ensuring a balance between short- and long-term development was a major concern. With regard to national capacities, UNICEF was impressed by the quality of its partners, especially in the areas of education, and by the commitment of the authorities to improve children's rights and relevant legislation. The Palestinian community had done a remarkable job in ensuring school completion and was very actively pursuing school drop-outs.

53. The Executive Board approved the aggregate indicative budget of the draft CPD (see chapter III, decision 2003/6).

Regional Office for Europe

54. The Regional Director for Europe said that while UNICEF did not have country programmes in industrialized countries, its 37 National Committees

performed a wide range of activities, including fund-raising, development education and advocacy. Total income from National Committees had increased dramatically in 2002 to over $460 million, and there were indications that 2003 would be another productive year. The vast majority of this income came from individual donors, and these supporters were a powerful force to influence policies benefiting children globally and within their own countries. In addition to fund-raising, the Committees had launched many initiatives around the themes of the MTSP, often with the support of the Regional Office for Europe. The UNICEF office in Brussels was also playing an increasingly important role in expanding the funding partnership with the European Union.

C. Intercountry programmes

55. The Executive Board had before it a recommendation to increase the other resources ceiling for intercountry programmes for 2002-2003 (E/ICEF/2003/P/L.14), which was introduced by the Director, Programme Division. He said that at its second regular session of 2001, the Executive Board had approved a total of $203 million for other resources funding for intercountry programmes for the 2002-2003 biennium (E/ICEF/2001/P/L.74 and E/ICEF/2001/6, decision 2001/16). To date, $190 million in other resources funding had been received through the intercountry programmes. Based on the anticipated receipt through 2003 of additional other resources funds for intercountry programmes, an increase of $100 million was required in the other resources ceiling, from $203 million to $303 million, for the 2002-2003 biennium. The Executive Board approved the recommendation without comment (see chapter III, decision 2003/7).

D. Review of the issue of the establishment of an operational reserve

56. The Executive Board had before it a report on the issue of establishing an operational reserve (E/ICEF/2003/AB/L.4), as well as the report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (E/ICEF/2003/AB/L.6), which were introduced by the Comptroller. She said that report had been prepared in response to Executive Board decision 2001/7 in which the Board had decided that UNICEF should continue its current financial management practice based on management of its short-term liquidity requirements on a cash-flow basis and should not establish a funded operational reserve. The Board had also decided to maintain the issue under review and consider it further during 2003.

57. The Comptroller said that under its current policy, established by the Board in 1987, UNICEF must maintain year-end cash balances of regular resources income equal to approximately 10 per cent of the following year's regular resources income. The liquidity requirement was limited to regular resources income because of the self-funding requirement for other resources. Since the Executive Board last discussed the issue of an operational reserve in 2001, UNICEF had exceeded the 10 per cent liquidity requirement, as it has done since the measure was established. In addition, UNICEF has met the informal liquidity ratio reported in its financial statements.

58. While an operational reserve could provide a short-term response mechanism to address an unforeseen shortfall in receipts and income, as well as afford an opportunity to earn marginally increased interest income through longer-term investments, it created a balance sheet asset at the expense of funding programmes

and might engender increased costs if it became necessary to break long-term investment commitments to utilize the funds. The Executive Director, therefore, recommended that UNICEF continue to manage its liquidity in accordance with the liquidity requirement approved by the Executive Board and that it not establish a funded operational reserve. The Executive Board approved the recommendation without comment (see chapter III, decision 2003/8).

E. UNICEF recovery policy

59. The Comptroller made a brief introduction to the proposals in the report on the UNICEF recovery policy (E/ICEF/2003/AB/L.5). Delegations expressed appreciation for the extensive consultations organized by the secretariat since the last Executive Board session. They endorsed the principles that other resources should support the MTSP priorities and that regular resources should not subsidize the support costs for other resources. They also encouraged UNICEF to apply procedures that reduce transaction costs for other resources programmes.

60. Delegations addressing this agenda item reiterated the importance of regular resources as the foundation of UNICEF programmes of cooperation, and urged donors to increase contributions to regular resources. Other resources, they stressed, were also important, but as a complement to regular resources, not to replace them. The Board and UNICEF both needed to continue to pursue this policy. The thematic funding mechanism was considered to be second best next to regular resources, and delegations endorsed the incentives for channelling funds to thematic funding. It was also noted that the recovery rate for thematic funding would benefit from economies of scale.

61. Speakers noted the Advisory Committee's non-critical review of the revised proposal and the suggestion for periodic review by the Executive Board, as contained in document E/ICEF/2003/AB/L.6. UNICEF was requested to pursue the harmonization of methodology among the funds and programmes in the UNDG, and to allow that called for the UNICEF recovery rates to be approved as an interim policy.

62. The Director of Programme Division indicated that different donors had different expectations on reporting, which put a heavy burden on UNICEF country offices, national and local authorities, and NGOs, with an impact on transaction costs. He noted that the donor reporting process was also being reviewed in the UNDG working group on harmonization and simplification. He also said that reduced transaction costs would improve the quality of UNICEF reporting on thematic results.

63. One delegation questioned the principle of recovering incremental costs, as other resources had been consistently high, with relative predictability. Except for that purpose, other resources contributions compared with regular resources in terms of predictability, as both types of contributions were voluntary. Pointing out that other resources funding was no longer marginal for UNICEF, he called for a need to move towards full cost recovery as a long-term goal. On the other hand, another delegation mentioned that full cost recovery was untenable, and supported the revised proposal made by the secretariat, which included measures to reduce transaction costs. Most speakers concurred with the need to fully recover marginal or incremental costs of activities funded from other resources, but not the basic fixed costs of UNICEF operations. The Comptroller also reiterated that full cost

recovery would not be possible, as UNICEF was an intergovernmental organization, with worldwide coverage from its regular resources.

64. On the subject of earmarked contributions, delegations agreed that donors should make an effort to review their administrative procedures that would reduce transaction costs to UNICEF. Demands from other resources contributors should not put additional strains on regular resources, and these needed to be taken into account in the determination of the recovery rates. Delegations also noted that larger contributions could benefit from economies of scale, and called for a recovery mechanism that was simple, transparent and efficient.

65. While supporting the proposal, a speaker raised the concerns of countries with high per capita donations, but small total contributions. The Comptroller noted that while some of the incentives targeted large donors due to economies of scale, small contributors could take advantage of the reduced rate for thematic contributions.

66. On the subject of rates for other resources contributions from programme countries, the Comptroller commented that UNICEF did not have cost-sharing arrangements in these countries like UNDP. As to the private sector fund-raising in programme countries, she said that UNICEF appreciated the support of Governments, adding that the current rate of 5 per cent would be maintained. While private sector fund-raising was costly to manage, and the rates did not cover the full cost of its management, the subsidization was justified to encourage local fund-raising and the direct funding of country programmes. Several delegations expressed satisfaction with the proposed rates for private sector resources raised in programme countries as well as for the special consideration given to the National Committees. The representative of the National Committees welcomed the consultation process initiated by the secretariat following the last Board session and noted their support of the rates in the revised proposal. Following further consultations, the Executive Board approved the draft decision on the UNICEF recovery policy (see chapter III, decision 2003/9).

F. Child protection issues: oral report

67. This oral presentation was made by the Deputy Director, Programme Division, and the Chief, Child Protection Section. They described the magnitude and analysis of the problem, which focused on the numbers of children killed, wounded or disabled; child soldiers, separated children; and the sexual exploitation and abuse of children and women. UNICEF strategies for action in these areas included advocacy, services and capacity-building, and partnerships. In conclusion, they reported on the impact of the protection measures as well as on the challenges.

68. On the subject of child soldiers, the country delegation of the Democratic Republic of the Congo confirmed that her Government had responded favourably to the General Assembly resolution to end the recruitment of child soldiers and was trying to increase efforts in this regard. She urged UNICEF not to overlook the many ways children were affected by war in developing countries, including those impacted by the use of rape as a weapon of war. The Chief, Child Protection Section, acknowledged that the Democratic Republic of the Congo provided a good example for the possibility of the successful demobilization of child soldiers without having to wait for a final peace settlement.

69. Several questions were raised regarding the availability of long-term data documenting the success of the reintegration of child soldiers in Sierra Leone that

took place in 1999. Speakers wanted to know whether any specific challenges had been identified. The Senior Adviser, Child Protection, confirmed the importance of follow-up action. He added that a study was being carried out in Sierra Leone, and that more information would be available soon on the long-term reintegration of former child combatants.

70. A speaker felt that UNICEF could do more to stress the impact of psychosocial work in the context of children affected by armed conflict. The Chief replied that UNICEF was working on the development of tools, guidance and assessment in this area, and learning from other programmes and sectors. Given the specific needs of psychosocial programmes, partnerships were extremely important. The challenges, she said, were compounded by a severe lack of resources.

71. One delegation commented that an "Era of Application" and the mainstreaming of child protection issues were essential to ensure progress in the field, and asked about the contribution of UNICEF to the "Era of Application" of international norms and standards for children affected by armed conflict. Another speaker wanted to know how UNICEF envisioned the successful mainstreaming of children affected by armed conflict within the United Nations system at both headquarters and country levels. In that connection, UNICEF was encouraged to raise the issue of child protection in all sectoral programmes, in PRSPs, in CCAs/UNDAFs and in national policies. The Director, Office of Emergency Programmes, responded that UNICEF was actively engaged in the Inter-agency Standing Committee and the Consolidated Appeal Process, both of which were methods for collaborating with key United Nations agencies around issues of child protection. The work of the Special Representative of the Secretary General for Children and Armed Conflict continued to place these issues on the agenda of the Security Council. At the country level, UNICEF was working within the United Nations country team to help protect the rights of children. The Chief added that mainstreaming child protection required that it be included in CCAs/UNDAFs and PRSPs, stressing the importance of linking child protection to the wider development agenda represented by these mechanisms.

72. In response to a question about clarifying the link between the Millennium Development Goals and child protection, the Senior Adviser used the example of girls' education. Child protection issues — sexual abuse and exploitation in particular — were major impediments to girls' education. He explained that child protection was not separate issue. Rather, it was an integral part of the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. He informed further that the Child Protection Section was working on linking child protection with results-based management, on identifying results and on finding ways to measure these results.

73. Questions were raised about how UNICEF planned to mobilize resources and draw more attention to the areas of greatest need. The Director, Office of Emergency Programmes, announced that there would be a meeting on donor behaviour in Stockholm from 16 to 17 June. UNICEF would participate in the meeting and try to draw attention to the need for more resources for child protection and forgotten emergencies.

74. Several speakers commented on the issue of advocacy, which, it was felt, should not be viewed as a programming choice, but rather a means to inform every aspect of programming. UNICEF was urged to mainstream advocacy at all levels. At present, there was a lack of data to inform advocacy efforts. In response, the Chief affirmed that advocacy was an essential programmatic component, but that it was

not optional. The MTSP made it clear that advocacy was to be a key strategy at the country level.

75. UNICEF was encouraged to use the valuable research conducted by the Innocenti Research Centre to inform work on the ground, as well as to strengthen Innocenti publications on child protection in the specific areas of trafficking, drug abuse, sexual exploitation and violence. The Chief acknowledged the tremendous value of the work carried out by the Centre. She informed that publications on trafficking and on the protection and care of orphans were forthcoming.

76. Other child protection issues were raised by delegations. In its approach to children affected by armed conflict, a speaker said that UNICEF could improve its work in the area of gender. The organization's emphasis on girls and women, as well as on the role of boys and men in perpetuating sexual abuse and exploitation, could be addressed more systematically. A number of delegations expressed concern about UNICEF work in the area of children with disabilities. The Chief noted the call for improved reporting in this area as well in the area of gender.

77. A speaker encouraged UNICEF to focus on (a) the development of social safety networks; (b) the obligation of the State to protect children; (c) legal reforms; (d) understanding the effects of violence on children; and (e) birth registration. The inclusion of child labour, juvenile justice, FGM and disabled children on the UNICEF child protection agenda was also urged. The Senior Adviser explained that the presentation was not intended to be exhaustive and did not report on all of the issues that fell under the umbrella of child protection. Rather, it had focused on three issues related to armed conflict. On birth registration, the Chief informed delegations that UNICEF carried out birth registration in 75 countries. In fact, birth registration was the theme of this year's "Day of the African Child".

78. In response to a question about the position of UNICEF on the death penalty for minors, the Executive Director said that UNICEF was guided by article 37 (a) of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which "ensures that capital punishment shall not be imposed for offences committed by persons below eighteen years of age". UNICEF joined with others to advocate on this issue.

79. A speaker commented that, within the context of the MTSP, child protection did not adequately address discrimination. The Chief replied that the issue of discrimination was being taken up in all sectors, and that there was wide acknowledgement that it was cross-cutting at all levels. The Executive Director added that non-discrimination was one of the guiding principles of the Convention, and that the Mission Statement of UNICEF included references to children with disabilities.

80. In conclusion, the Executive Director said that members of the Board were challenged to understand their roles and responsibilities as they pertained to child protection. She stressed that every nation had a responsibility in the area of child protection. There was a long way to go in this relatively new area, and UNICEF had to continue to improve its efforts with a range of partners. A great challenge was to address the broad range of issues that fell under the umbrella of child protection. She welcomed and encouraged the support and resources of Board members.

G. UNICEF action in favour of AIDS orphans: oral report

81. The Chief of the UNICEF HIV/AIDS Section and his team presented an oral report on the situation of orphans and children made vulnerable by HIV/AIDS. It

covered the scale of the HIV/AIDS epidemic; its impact, specifically on children; the goals, strategies, role and response of UNICEF; and what needed to be done to provide care and support for orphans and vulnerable children.

82. Speakers agreed that orphans and vulnerable children were a critical element of the UNICEF response to the HIV/AIDS epidemic, that they should be given greater attention at all levels, and that orphans needed a central place in terms of prevention, care and support. Issues that were of particular concern to some delegations were: prolonging the lives of mothers with improved health care and nutrition, and access to anti-retroviral drugs; the role of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria in addressing the orphans crisis and the capacity of UNICEF to help countries apply for funds; the impact of gender issues on orphans; the deterioration of care for orphans and the effect on the next generation of children growing up alone; the UNICEF partnership with UNAIDS; advocacy for orphans and vulnerable children within national poverty reduction strategies; and the importance of appropriate sociocultural mobilization campaigns to bring about awareness of the orphan crisis at the country level.

83. In response, the secretariat agreed that Governments needed to assume a greater role in the care of orphans and that legislation was important at the country level, as was a system for monitoring the adequacy of the government response. In terms of funding, the United States had made a specific commitment to orphans and vulnerable children in most affected countries. Education was a fundamental and core priority for orphans' rights. Keeping parents alive was also key to the response, and the UNICEF strategy was to provide better nutrition and treatment against opportunistic infections, including providing vitamins to infected children and parents, especially women. The panel highlighted the prevention of mother-to-child transmission (PMTCT) "plus" initiative that UNICEF, in partnership with WHO and *Médicins sans frontières* (Doctors without Borders), was currently promoting and which included providing information on the sources and pricing of anti-retroviral drugs.

84. The secretariat also noted that the Executive Director had stressed the importance of placing orphans and vulnerable children higher on the agenda of the Global Fund, which currently had budgeted $1.5 billion for treatment, but also needed to focus on prevention efforts. While UNICEF helped countries apply to the Fund, there were expenses involved, and new resources were needed to cover these costs.

85. Regarding UNICEF leadership as a convenor around the issue of orphans and vulnerable children, the secretariat referred to the UNICEF global partnership forum to be held in October 2003, as well as regional meetings convened by UNICEF in the last two years. UNICEF had played a key role at regional and country levels in bringing partners together. Poverty reduction strategies, sector investment programmes and SWAps were key instruments for coordination. UNAIDS has played an important role in helping UNICEF to build capacities at global and regional levels.

86. On the issue of the next generation of orphans and the inter-generational impact of HIV/AIDS, the secretariat noted the evidence of increasing numbers of orphans even where the epidemic itself was levelling off. UNICEF, with other agencies, had emphasized the role of communities and getting resources to the community level as an important response in dealing with the next generation of orphans. UNICEF worked with faith-based organizations and parliamentarians in caring for orphans stigmatized by HIV.

87. Another member of the team said that there were differences between boys and girls, and a difference if a child lost his or her father or mother. UNICEF was developing research methods that could be used by Governments to help measure gender differences among orphans, including a study in Zimbabwe that would look at 1,500 orphan girls and their situations, and their specific risk of becoming infected with HIV.

88. In response to general comments on the need for policy documents to be presented to the Executive Board in addition to oral reports, the Executive Director said that it was difficult to provide up-to-date information when written reports had to be submitted for translation two months prior to a Board session, but encouraged continued discussion on methods to better engage the Executive Board in policy dialogue.

H. Ensuring children's rights in Africa: oral report

89. In his introduction to this agenda item, the Director of Programme Division provided some contextual background information to the oral report and its relation to the concern and priority expressed by the Executive Board in ensuring children's rights in Africa. This report, he said, responded to the concern that childhood in Africa had been in jeopardy for more a decade. The children and women of sub-Saharan Africa remained acutely vulnerable and exposed to the combined impact of the shrinking world economy, unserviceable international debt, armed conflicts and spreading violence, conjugated with the HIV/AIDS pandemic. In response to the Board's expressed interest in a report that focused on key points that were making a difference for children and gave a sense of hope, the Director said that the presentation would emphasize a few positive achievements that offered hope amid the harsh realities of widespread poverty, conflict, HIV/AIDS and malaria, and confirmed the continuing need and validity for priority attention given to Africa. The examples were intended to highlight successful national and subnational efforts to achieve goals rather than focus on the daunting issues of the continent as a whole. In a slight change in the usual format, the Director of Programme Division, invited the two UNICEF Regional Directors from sub-Saharan Africa to also address the Board on the subject, which covered the following five areas. Also available for Board members was a report on the regional meeting for Eastern and Southern Africa on the MTSP held in Maseru, Lesotho (E/ICEF/2003/CRP.11), and a report on the joint meeting of UNICEF, UNDP, UNFPA and WFP on children and poverty in West and Central Africa held in Libreville, Gabon (E/ICEF/2003/CRP.13).

Response of country programmes to the medium-term strategic plan priorities

90. The Director of Programme Division highlighted the high level of advocacy for political commitment for the priorities, including meetings with Heads of States at various summits and forums, including the United Nations Special Session on Children; and strengthening relations with the African Union in general and the Economic Commission of West African States and the Southern African Development Community in particular. He mentioned specific national policies aimed at ensuring that children had the best start in life. The Director said that the UNDAF and PRSP processes had been the best way of ensuring appropriate entry points for country programmes and achievement of the MTSP priorities. The importance of partnerships and strategic alliances with bilateral and multilateral donors, as well as with other actors, in achieving the MTSP priorities was also stressed. In the areas of increased investment, the example of girls' education, in

particular, was cited. The response of country programmes to the HIV/AIDS pandemic, including PMTCT activities, was also noted.

Crisis in southern Africa

91. The Regional Director for Eastern and Southern Africa said that the humanitarian crisis in southern Africa had the potential of affecting some 40 million people. While drought and food shortages were the main features of the crisis, widespread poverty, HIV/AIDS, female- and child-headed households, absenteeism and drop-outs from schools, the deterioration of national infrastructures and the lack of vital personnel also contributed to the situation. In spite of the serious challenges facing the region, however, UNICEF, in collaboration with numerous partners, was engaged in activities that were making important differences in people's lives. The Regional Director focused his remarks on achievements and examples in the areas of HIV/AIDS and girls' education in the southern Africa region.

ChildInfo and monitoring the Millennium Development Goals in Africa

92. The Regional Director for West and Central Africa explained that the purpose of ChildInfo was to assist UNICEF in the use of information technology to accelerate change from the current situation, where children' rights were often violated, to a time when their rights were fulfilled. As standardized software packages, ChildInfo and DevInfo enabled UNICEF to organize and document statistical data on the situation of the Millennium Development Goals in the region and to present a variety of presentation tools such as tables, graphs and maps. The databases, she continued, could be updated regularly and formed the basis for many evaluation exercises. She informed delegations that the Africa Union had requested UNICEF support for the creation of Africa Info, an adaptation of the country-level ChildInfo database, which would help to monitor country and regional achievements towards agreed goals. She gave examples of how ChildInfo was used by countries and others in Africa for the welfare of its populations.

Contribution of UNICEF to the New Partnership for Africa's Development

93. The Regional Director for Eastern and Southern Africa explained some of the positive contributions UNICEF was making to help ensure that the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) evolved into the kind of development mechanism envisaged by African Heads of State and the international community. On HIV/AIDS, UNICEF was prepared to work with UNAIDS and other technical partners to support the inclusion of a strategy for the pandemic into the NEPAD framework. He said it was expected that the application of poverty reduction strategies would be one of the primary methods of achieving the objectives of NEPAD and the Millennium Development Goals, and UNICEF was working with its regional offices to strengthen the understanding and participation of country offices in social sector PRSPs.

UNICEF and partnerships for Africa

94. The Regional Director for West and Central Africa affirmed that host Governments remained the principle UNICEF partners in the programmes of cooperation that sought to achieve the priorities of the MTSP and the Millennium Development Goals. She detailed the considerable scope for reinforcing working relations with a wide range of partners. She said that *A World Fit for Children* provided several possibilities to extend partnerships in planning and implementation

efforts to achieve the priorities of the MTSP. In the follow-up to the Special Session on Children and the *Say Yes for Children* campaign, partners of African development needed to use their influence to promote the priorities for children in processes such as the CCA, UNDAF, PRSP and the national plans related to achievement of the NEPAD goals.

Comments from delegations

95. Speakers addressing this agenda item expressed overall satisfaction with the priority focus of UNICEF on Africa. However, one delegation expressed the view that within the multiple priorities enumerated in the oral report, a selection needed to be made about which ones would be given focus and how they would be addressed. Linked to the post-polio eradication period, the same delegation asked what UNICEF was doing — and would do in the future — to support interventions and strategies in the health sector. She said that the priorities should also include maternal mortality, improving health care systems, curriculum reform and gender sensitivity training for boys within the framework of girls' education. While noting the comprehensiveness of the oral report, another delegation commented on the lack of information about the process and requested additional information on the development process in southern Africa. The speaker also praised UNICEF work in institutional capacity-building. On girls' education, the Regional Director for Eastern and Southern Africa stated that it was not only important to get them into school, but that it was also a factor in determining how a country developed. He said that priorities within the MTSP framework varied according to country-specific situations. In southern Africa, for instance, the focus on HIV/AIDS, girls' education and malaria were appropriate. He reminded the Board that survival remained the main concern for Africans and that malaria was the worst killer. He said that the post-polio thrust of health interventions should take into account the need to continue to strengthen routine immunization, and support for the revitalization of health services should be at the top of the list.

96. Many comments focused on the issue of rights. A question was raised about how working from a rights perspective had changed the way UNICEF worked and how it had impacted on the work of the United Nations in general. UNICEF was also asked to define its role in the United Nations reform agenda and humanitarian assistance. In the area of child rights and protection, a speaker expressed the view that UNICEF had a special role to play in advocacy on behalf of AIDS orphans and other children affected by HIV/AIDS. Furthermore, UNICEF was expected to play a catalytic role within the United Nations system to promote the greater availability of anti-retroviral drugs. On accountabilities for human rights, the Regional Director for Eastern and Southern Africa indicated that there was often a lack of capacity on the part of Governments, and that the United Nations, bilateral donors, NGOs and other partners continued to help in this area to close the capacity gap. There was also a need to monitor how this capacity-building took place. The Regional Director for West and Central Africa added said at the country level, the United Nations system used the mechanisms of inter-agency cooperation to address the issues of accountability for human rights. Increasingly, the CCA and UNDAF were being done from a rights-based approach. The periodic review of country programmes in relation to the UNDAF was a function of the resident coordinator system.

97. On the subject of female genital cutting, one delegation stated that the practice remained a multinational problem related to child protection and HIV/AIDS, and wanted to know what UNICEF was doing to help eliminate it. The delegation also asked what UNICEF was doing to support women's sexual and reproductive rights.

The Regional Director for West and Central Africa provided examples of what was being done in Senegal, Burkina Faso and Niger in this area.

98. In order to end child trafficking and promote labour policies to protect children, one speaker said that greater collaboration was needed with the judiciary, police, customs officials and social workers, starting with their sensitization and training. Birth registration was seen as another important intervention in the campaign against trafficking and other exploitations. The delegation wanted to know how lessons learned were being used to further promote prevention in these areas. The Regional Director for West and Central Africa explained that several countries in the region were working on legislation that would provide increased punishment for convicted traffickers. Community surveillance of children within their areas had been a successful tool for monitoring children's whereabouts. She added that the sharing of information between communities should also be encouraged.

I. Human resources in the context of the medium-term strategic plan: oral report

99. The report was presented by the Director of the Division of Human Resources (DHR), who said that its human resources were the organization's best asset. Careful attention to staff recruitment, deployment, development and conditions of service were of paramount importance. United Nations reform and inter-agency initiatives had also helped to improve UNICEF strategies and approaches to inter-agency mobility, spouse employment, flexible work arrangements, security and safety of staff, and response to HIV/AIDS in the workplace. Following a global consultation held in Brasilia in 2002, DHR had developed a strategic Human Resources Change and Transformation Plan, which focused on improving corporate strategic human resources planning to better identify, define and forecast current and future human resource needs; the recruitment, selection and placement of staff to ensure that UNICEF has the right staff at the right place at the right time; career and staff development; performance management; and staff well-being.

100. In the year since the plan had been developed, training and learning programmes had strengthened staff capacities for rights-based programming, enhanced knowledge of the MTSP priority areas, strengthened capacities for emergency response and preparedness, and enhanced leadership and management skills. Competency profiles had been developed as successful recruitment and development tools. Personal and professional development programmes were empowering staff to manage their careers. Global rotation and targeted recruitment campaigns, such as the Young Professionals Programme, had provided required human resources to organizational priority areas. Improved conditions of service and work life policies had improved the organization's ability to attract and retain competent staff, particularly in difficult duty stations.

101. Challenges included the need to sustain efforts to promote human resources management as the business of all managers, bring human resources management closer to staff through the network of regional and country office human resources officers, and improve relevant information technology systems to promote greater efficiency.

102. In response to a request for additional information on the Young Professional's Programme, the secretariat said that it was designed to recruit talented young professionals to be groomed for management positions in the future. They had been

selected through competitive assessment, with attention to gender and national diversity.

103. Asked whether UNICEF was recruiting the required people and competencies, especially in field locations, and to explain the effectiveness of the selection process, the secretariat confirmed that UNICEF was recruiting the staff it needed in most cases. It was felt that improvements in its approach to recruitment and improved conditions of service would further improve performance in this area.

104. In response to a request for clarification of how UNICEF was benefiting from talent from other United Nations agencies given that it had released a number of its own staff, especially at senior levels, under the inter-agency mobility programme, the secretariat said that while UNICEF was receiving a small number of staff from other agencies, it encouraged inter-agency mobility at the middle and junior levels as a way to build experience.

105. The secretariat explained how UNICEF was preparing staff for emergency assignments and following up when they returned. The revised rotation policy, based in part on the principles of burden-sharing, and the mainstreaming of capacity-building for emergency response into learning and development activities were effectively preparing staff for emergency assignments.

106. In preparing staff for high-level policy dialogue, given that it was a major thrust of MTSP strategies, the secretariat said that it had initiated leadership and management development programmes for senior staff and other learning modules to ensure that its staff could carry out the type of policy dialogue envisaged by the MTSP.

107. To ensure gender balance, the secretariat noted that 45 per cent of UNICEF staff were women, the second highest rate in the United Nations system. However, there were still challenges in this regard at the senior level.

J. Reports on field visits of Executive Board members

108. The Executive Board had before it a report on the field visit to Mozambique, which took place from 10 to 19 March and included a joint segment with members of the Executive Boards of UNDP/UNFPA and WFP. The reports (E/ICEF/2003/CRP.9 and Add.1) were introduced by the Vice-President and Permanent Representative of Lesotho to the United Nations. Also before the Board was a report on a second visit, to Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, which also took place between 10 and 19 March (E/ICEF/2003/CRP.10). That report was introduced by the Deputy Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations. The final report, on a visit by members of the Bureau to Bolivia from 7 to 11 April (E/ICEF/2003/CRP.12) was introduced by the Vice-President and Permanent Representative of Slovenia to the United Nations. He stated that the visit, the first explicitly for members of the Bureau, was undertaken on the President's initiative and was financed by the Government of Switzerland. The team recommended that the practice continue every year.

109. A member of the team that visited Mozambique said that the members were able to see first-hand the innovative approaches used by UNICEF in implementing its country programme, especially its work in maximizing the impact of partnerships at the community level. One of the most valuable lessons of the mission was the importance of achieving a good balance between the outcome of programme activities and the process of programme delivery through support for established

community structures, which helped to address the question of programme sustainability and service delivery. If UNICEF continued to focus on building local capacities in support of programme delivery, much of the difficulty related to sustainability would be resolved. In the joint segment of the visit, it became clear that further attention could be given to improving collaborative and joint programming, although it should be as simple as possible, and every effort should be made to reduce transaction costs.

110. Another member of that team said that the visit was physically tiring and emotionally draining because it gave a face to misery and poverty. For example, the team visited a district hospital responsible for 500,000 people, but with only 2 doctors and 34 nurses. That would be comparable to having just 36 doctors and 600 nurses for the 9 million people living in New York City. The visit also raised some questions about sustainability in a country where the vast majority of the budget came from foreign grants, and in view of Mozambique's lack of capacity. Some 60 per cent of public servants had only a primary education, which, in many cases, was incomplete. Capacities were further drained by the requirements donor countries placed on recipient countries. As for United Nations cooperation, the coordination mechanisms were in place and worked, but it seemed that they were time-consuming and presupposed that whoever wanted to participate had a constant presence in the capital. Regarding joint programming, he agreed that additional layers of reporting and administrative burden should be avoided.

111. The Executive Director said that while Mozambique was an extremely poor country, it did have positive revenue growth, which was a factor in its favour. She added that the visit to Tajikistan and Uzbekistan had the low levels of resources available for programmes in Central Asia partly because donors were not as familiar with them as they were with other regions. These countries faced very serious challenges because of poverty and its effects on children. The Executive Board took note of the reports on the three field visits.

K. Other matters

112. One speaker, on behalf of several other delegations, said that the Executive Board was making real progress in improving its working methods. Informal discussions were allowing greater interaction between the Board and secretariat on such important issues as children and armed conflict, HIV/AIDS and wider child rights issues. The Board had a collective challenge to continue to improve its working methods to help UNICEF make progress towards its organizational priorities. One lesson learned from the annual session was the need to place greater emphasis on the "big picture" of the five MTSP priorities and overall progress. It would be helpful if the thematic reports on the MTSP priorities could be presented as official documents and presented to the Board in advance of the session. It would also be helpful if the Executive Director's report and the thematic reports provided a summary page of key issues for discussion. That would help the Board provide more strategic advice on progress, constraints to progress and possible solutions in the key MTSP areas.

113. The delegate of Switzerland introduced the draft decision on the UNICEF experience of joint programming, which had been the subject of informal consultations. The Executive Board approved the draft decision as contained in document E/ICEF/2003/CRP.15 (see chapter III, decision 2003/10).

L. Closing of the session

114. The Executive Director said that the session had been marked by very healthy and rich discussions, and that the secretariat appreciated the opportunity to make both formal and informal presentations to the Executive Board. The informal presentations made during the week often focused on evolving issues and ongoing work, and she hoped that they would be able to revert to some of them at future sessions. For example, the presentation on child protection had focused on children in armed conflict in order to provide a detailed report on only one aspect of a larger issue. Other child protection issues could be discussed at future sessions, as could other MTSP priority areas.

115. In closing, the Executive Director paid tribute to Roslyn Gibson, a member of the Executive Board secretariat, who was retiring from UNICEF after 30 years of service, 18 of them with the Executive Board.

116. The President noted the outstanding participation of delegations during the session, which had been very open and interactive. The session had many positive results, especially the outstanding work done on the UNICEF recovery policy. The Executive Director's annual report on progress towards the five MTSP priorities had been very informative, and the discussion on it very rich. The discussions also showed that the results-based approach, which was still a challenge for everyone, remained a necessity that had be explored further. He noted the outstanding exchanges on the draft CPDs, and said that the various oral reports provided more depth to the discussions on those areas. However, the discussions could have been even more helpful if brief notes had been made available in advance of the discussions, and he asked the secretariat to bear this in mind for future presentations.

III. Decisions adopted by the Executive Board

2003/6
Draft country programme documents

The Executive Board

Approves the aggregate indicative budgets for the following country programmes of cooperation:

Region/country	*Period*	*Regular resources*	*Other resources*	*Document E/ICEF/2003/*
Eastern and Southern Africa				
Angola	2004	5 537 000	18 400 000	P/L.1
Kenya	2004-2008	24 659 000	32 500 000	P/L.2
Madagascar	2004	4 099 000	4 850 000	P/L.3
Somalia	2004-2008	22 770 000	80 000 000	P/L.4
West and Central Africa				
Benin	2004-2008	9 426 000	16 000 000	P/L.5
Congo	2004-2008	4 879 000	7 500 000	P/L.6
Niger	2004-2007	25 024 000	26 494 000	P/L.7
Sierra Leone	2004-2007	11 794 000	16 000 000	P/L.8
Ecuador	2004-2008	3 912 000	10 000 000	P/L.9
East Asia and the Pacific				
Democratic People's Republic of Korea	2004-2006	3 310 000	9 000 000	P/L.10
Philippines	2004	2 198 000	5 000 000	P/L.11
South Asia				
Pakistan	2004-2008	61 616 000	65 000 000	P/L.12
Middle East and North Africa				
Palestinian children and women in Jordan, Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic and the Occupied Palestinian Territory	2004-2005	3 200 000	9 230 000	P/L.13

Annual session
3-4 June 2003

2003/7
Increase of other resources ceiling for intercountry programmes for 2002-2003

The Executive Board

Approves an increase of $100 million in the other resources ceiling for intercountry programmes, from $203 million to $303 million, for the 2002-2003 biennium, as contained in document E/ICEF/2003/P/L.14.

Annual session
4 June 2003

2003/8
Establishment of an operational reserve

The Executive Board

Recommends that UNICEF continue to manage its liquidity in accordance with the liquidity requirement approved by the Executive Board and that it not establish a funded operational reserve, as described in document E/ICEF/2003/AB/L.4.

Annual session
4 June 2003

2003/9
The UNICEF recovery policy

The Executive Board,

Having reviewed the UNICEF recovery policy, as contained in document E/ICEF/2003/AB/L.1, and the document E/ICEF/2003/AB/L.5 submitted at the present session,

1. *Stresses* that regular resources, inter alia, because of their untied nature, are the bedrock of the operational activities of UNICEF and, in this regard, notes with serious concern the stagnation of regular resources available to UNICEF;

2. *Requests* that all donors strive to increase contributions to regular resources, and requests the Executive Director to hold consultations to encourage donors to increase the proportion of contributions to regular resources;

3. *Endorses* the objectives that other resources support the medium-term strategic plan (MTSP) priorities and that regular resources should not subsidize the support costs for other resources programmes, and encourages UNICEF to apply procedures that reduce transaction costs for other resources programmes;

4. *Endorses* the aim of eliminating, in the medium term, the subsidy of support costs for other resources programmes by regular resources;

5. *Calls on* those donors contributing to other resources to consider directing these contributions to thematic areas;[1]

6. *Calls further on* all donors to simplify their administrative and reporting requirements to significantly reduce the administrative costs of their contributions to other resources;

7. *Decides* to apply, as an interim measure, the methodology as described in paragraph 13 of document E/ICEF/2003/AB/L.1 and in its annex II. The methodology will be reviewed by the Executive Board in light of the harmonization discussion among the United Nations agencies;

8. *Authorizes* the Executive Director to apply the following rates[2] to all new agreements to be signed after Executive Board approval of the revised policy on an interim basis:

(a) 5 per cent for all resources raised from the private sector in the programme countries;

(b) For other private sector resources, 5 per cent for thematic contributions and 7 per cent for non-thematic contributions;

(c) For other contributions to thematic areas, 8 per cent, and an additional reduction of 1 per cent for 90 per cent up-front payments;

(d) For non-thematic contributions, 12 per cent and additional reductions of 1 per cent for 90 per cent up-front payment, 1 per cent for contributions over $500,000, 2 per cent for contributions over $2 million, 3 per cent for contributions over $10 million, and, as a transitional arrangement through 2004, 4 per cent for contributions over $40 million;

9. *Recognizes* that the rates approved above constitute a step towards the reduction of the subsidy of the support costs of other resources programmes by regular resources;

10. *Requests* the Executive Director to bring the issue of the recovery policy to the attention of the working group on harmonization and simplification of the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) with a view to harmonizing the methodology used by the UNDG members in devising their recovery policies;

11. *Requests* the Executive Director to report to the Executive Board on the experiences of the recovery policy, especially on actual cost recovery achieved and recovery rates applied to projects during this period, on its effects on the regular resources, as well as on the harmonization efforts undertaken, and to submit proposals for further steps towards the elimination of any remaining subsidy of support costs of other resources programmes by regular resources at the second regular session of the Executive Board in 2005 for a review of this interim policy.

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[1] The thematic areas are the five MTSP priority areas (immunization plus, girls' education, child protection, HIV/AIDS, early childhood development) and humanitarian assistance.
[2] All incentive reductions are applicable to annual contributions.

Annual session
5 June 2003

2003/10
UNICEF experience of joint programming

The Executive Board

1. *Recognizes* the commitment of UNICEF to making an effective contribution to a number of reform initiatives, including the reform programme of the Secretary-General, as endorsed by the General Assembly, and the provisions of the triennial comprehensive policy review as set out in General Assembly resolution 56/201 of 21 December 2001;

2. *Notes* the progress UNICEF is making, as set out in the Executive Director's annual report to the Economic and Social Council (E/ICEF/2003/4 (Part I)), on working with the Common Country Assessment and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework and also towards the simplification and harmonization of rules and procedures,[1] with a view to enhancing programme delivery;

3. *Reaffirms*, in this context, the aim of reducing the complexities and diversity of requirements which continue to place an enormous burden on programme countries through high transaction costs, and that innovations in this

area should achieve, in their implementation, the objective of reducing the administrative and financial costs to programme countries;

4. *Requests*, therefore, the Executive Director to submit to the Executive Board for consideration at its annual session in 2004 a written report containing an assessment, based on specific country examples, of the UNICEF experience of joint programming and other innovative and collaborative approaches aimed at improving programming effectiveness and reducing transaction costs for programme countries, and their associated costs and benefits.

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[1] As defined in resolution 56/201, section VI.

Annual session
5 June 2003

Annex

Joint meeting of the Executive Boards of UNICEF, UNDP/UNFPA and WFP

I. Simplification and harmonization

1. The Executive Director of UNICEF provided an overview of the 18-month-long simplification and harmonization process undertaken by the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) Executive Committee in implementing the provisions of the triennial comprehensive policy review (General Assembly resolution 56/201 of 21 December 2001). These included the new Country Programme Action Plan, which gave each agency a standard format for planning with partners for the duration of the programme cycle. She stressed that the ultimate test for all the simplification and harmonization efforts would be greater effectiveness and reduced transaction costs.

2. The Chairperson of the UNDG Programme Group explained the objectives, guiding principles and approaches of the simplification and harmonization process; provided a status report on progress to date; and introduced one of the simplification and harmonization tools — the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) results matrix. Five countries — Benin, Ecuador, Kenya, Niger and Pakistan — were presenting their country programmes to the Executive Boards and testing the new simplification and harmonization tools.

3. The Chairperson of the UNDG Management Group explained the principle behind common resource transfer modalities among Executive Committee agencies, which would reduce the burden on government partners. On joint programming, the objectives were to improve effectiveness and achieve better results and to improve efficiency specifically to reduce transaction costs for Governments as well as donors. The goal was to produce revised guidance by the end of 2003. She explained the three modalities of resource management: parallel funding; pass-through; and pooled funding. She described sector-wide approaches, another resource modality, as a form of pooled funding.

4. A representative of the Government of Benin and the United Nations Resident Coordinator for Benin reported on the experience to date in that country.

5. Speakers agreed that the work on simplification and harmonization, which was essential to increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of the United Nations system, had made significant progress and remained on track. Work in this area was central to programme delivery and would help to reduce transaction costs, while placing developing countries firmly "in the driver's seat" with regard to their national goals and priorities. The relation of simplification and harmonization with poverty reduction strategies and the UNDAF was seen as an important aspect. Speakers stressed the importance of linkages with the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development/Development Assistance Committee (OECD/DAC) and the international financial institutions.

6. Many speakers expressed appreciation for advances made by the funds and programmes in the area of joint programming, although some indicated that joint programming should be pursued where it is appropriate, and in close consultation with the Government. Referring to a recent decision by the UNICEF Executive

Board on joint programming, speakers suggested that other UNDG Executive Committee agencies should follow up on the issue.

7. The issue of resource mobilization was raised by several speakers, with a number of them encouraging the pooling of resources and integrated budgeting. Other issues raised included: the need to strengthen coordination; the need to strengthen national capacity-building; the importance of lessons learned; and the need for enhanced monitoring and evaluation in order to demonstrate that these initiatives can work at the country level.

8. Numerous comments were made about the future role of the joint meetings of Boards. They were seen by a number of delegations as an appropriate forum for policy dialogue, and it was suggested by these delegations that they be institutionalized, that reports and other background material be prepared jointly and in a timely manner by the relevant secretariats, and that they be given the authority to make formal decisions. A number of other delegations dissented from these proposals. Other suggestions for future agenda items included assessments of progress in simplification and harmonization and joint field visits.

II. Briefing on Iraq

9. The representatives of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), UNICEF and the World Food Programme (WFP) briefed the Executive Boards on their ongoing and planned activities in Iraq. They all reported progress in their respective areas of competence, which included reproductive health, education, immunization of children, food distribution, water supply and sanitation, energy supply, job creation and capacity development, especially since the adoption of Security Council resolution 1483. They also reported that the number of national and international personnel in Iraq had increased and were extending services to more areas despite the lingering security problems.

10. They reported that their activities were being coordinated and harmonized among the respective organizations, on the one hand, and with those of other stakeholders, including non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and community-based organizations, to ensure coherence, efficiency and effectiveness. UNICEF, for example, was collaborating with the World Health Organization in the assessment of the health sector; UNFPA was partnering with other agencies to provide health facilities for women; and UNDP was working with WFP in support of dredging activities. UNDP was also creating jobs to support sectors where other agencies were involved, such as the health sector. The funds and programmes were all involved in the UNDG working group on recovery and reconstruction coordinating the needs assessment effort.

11. The Executive Boards were also briefed on planned meetings for 23 and 24 June 2003 on the United Nations appeal, as well as a technical informal meeting, to share information on forward planning for the reconstruction of Iraq.

III. Transition from relief to development

12. The Executive Director of UNICEF gave a progress report on the UNDG Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs working group on transition issues, in her capacity as its chairperson. The working group had been established to promote national leadership in the transition from relief to development, and to clarify the role of both the United Nations and donors in supporting this process. Priorities during the transition phase included support for consolidation and stability, restoration of basic services and infrastructure, promotion of human rights and local capacity-building and support for refugees and internally displaced persons. The working group was focusing on eight countries and/or subregions that reflected a variety of circumstances, including countries with Security Council mandates, peace-keeping offices, special representatives of the Secretary-General, or the adaptation of existing tools like the Consolidated Appeals Process (CAP). The working group would present a progress report to the Economic and Social Council in July, and submit its report to the Secretary-General by September.

13. The Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Mozambique said that her country had a long history of coordination with the United Nations system, focusing both on immediate needs and long-term development. As demonstrated during the recent field visit by members of the Executive Boards, government ownership was central to this process, and coordination among all partners was the key to its success.

14. Issues raised by other delegations included: the need for increased coordination between United Nations agencies, including not only the funds and programmes, but also the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations; the need to consider natural as well as man-made disasters in the exercise; the need for the funds and programmes to focus on strengthening the capacities of people affected by disasters and the need to address gender issues in the transition phase.

15. Asked for update on the "Four Rs" (Repatriation, Reintegration, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction) concept developed by the Office of the United Nations Higher Commissioner for Refugees, and the Brookings process, concerning the gap between emergency funding and long-term reconstruction needs, the Executive Director said that the working group was trying to integrate the lessons of those initiatives. Recent missions to Sierra Leone and Sri Lanka would be assessed in its upcoming reports.

16. The issue of adequate funding was raised by several speakers. One representative said that his Government has established a separate budget line for transitional activities, 70 per cent of which had been channelled through the United Nations. Other funding challenges were the lack of coordination when transition moved from relief to development, and the lack of instruments for doing so, including the CAP. A final speaker referred to his Government's recent extensive experience in Afghanistan, where a lot of infrastructure had to be rebuilt while people still had to be fed and security was a problem. Because of good coordination between agencies, there had been good results, and these lessons were being applied to the country's assistance to Iraq via international organizations.

IV. Building on Monterrey

17. Delegations said that the Monterrey Consensus, reached at the International Conference on Financing for Development, had stressed that actors should remain engaged in follow-up activities through relevant intergovernmental and other governing bodies of stakeholders, and share experiences in the implementation and mainstreaming of the Consensus in United Nations operational activities at the national level.

18. They also stressed the urgency of galvanizing the follow-up activities, in particular the reduction of poverty, marginalization and destitution. They underscored the importance of a new compact among donor and recipient countries.

19. Delegations strongly supported the creation of instruments to measure the implementation of Millennium Development Goal 8, on developing a global partnership for development. They called on UNDP and OECD/DAC to develop such tools in full consultation with developing countries. They also stressed the significance of mutual accountability by donor and recipient partners.

20. Delegations renewed their determination to support the activities of the funds, programmes and specialized agencies of the United Nations, while underlining the need for increased official development assistance (ODA) in a stable and predictable manner. They also emphasized the importance of coherence, coordination and simplification of procedures and programmes, and active partnership by all actors to increase efficiency and effectiveness in resource utilization. They also observed that democratic governance and the rule of law were essential elements in establishing an enabling environment for domestic resource mobilization and the building of domestic capacities to empower countries to be responsible for their own development. Some delegations, demonstrating their support of follow-up activities to the Monterrey Conference, announced increased contributions to ODA.

21. Representatives of UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and WFP reported on activities in their respective areas — democratic governance, vaccinations, reproductive health, empowerment of women and humanitarian support undertaken in programme countries — in the implementation and mainstreaming of the Monterrey Consensus. They said that although their resources remained below demand, the Monterrey Conference had resulted in announced contributions to ODA, without which the situation would have been worse as a result of deflationary pressures in major donor countries. They stressed the need for better coordination among themselves and with other bilateral donors and international financial institutions, especially the World Bank, for effective and efficient utilization of scarce resources. They also supported the need to develop tools to measure performance and monitor impact at the national level.

V. HIV/AIDS: Addressing the recommendations of the five-year evaluation of UNAIDS

22. The Executive Director, UNFPA, provided an overview of the five-year evaluation of Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), highlighting the findings, the implications for agencies, the recommendations of the UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board (PCB) and how agencies had begun to address them. The Chair of the United Nations Theme Group on HIV/AIDS in Malawi, highlighted the challenges faced by the United Nations system at the

country level, using Malawi as a case study. The Coordinator of the National AIDS Commission of Portugal, representing the Chair of the PCB, made a presentation focusing on UNAIDS governance-related issues and recommendations pertinent to the Executive Boards of the co-sponsoring agencies.

23. Delegations stressed the importance of recognizing the dynamic nature of the epidemic and the need to break the silence and stigma surrounding HIV/AIDS. They stressed that reproductive health should not be delinked from HIV/AIDS. Speakers noted that in meeting the challenge of HIV/AIDS, it was essential to mobilize additional resources, both financial and human, and to ensure that the response was results-based and gender-sensitive, with particular attention focused on the needs of women and girls. Numerous delegations underscored the need to strengthen cooperation among the agencies, particularly at the country level and within the theme groups. It was stated that the United Nations system should facilitate national efforts through increased coordination and donors that should be prepared to support UNAIDS coordination mechanisms, including fully funding all components of the UNAIDS unified budget and work plan. Delegations encouraged the co-sponsors of UNAIDS to bring further consistency to their HIV/AIDS response.

24. Several delegations recommended that there should be a standing agenda item for the Executive Boards on the PCB recommendations and decisions. A number of delegations encouraged the agencies to undertake joint programming and also recommended that joint field visits focusing on HIV/AIDS should be organized in cooperation with UNAIDS for members of the Executive Boards. Delegations underscored the importance of system-wide sharing of the lessons learned from UNAIDS regarding improving the working methodology of the PCB and encouraged full cooperation and communication among the Executive Boards and the PCB. Emphasizing the linkage between food security, nutrition and HIV/AIDS, delegations stressed the need to coordinate food aid with other types of aid in addressing the epidemic. Delegations also pointed out the need to contribute to the ongoing discussion and dialogue on HIV/AIDS and governance issues in their own countries.

25. The agencies noted the guidance and recommendations offered by delegations and offered examples of their harmonized and collaborative work in addressing the HIV/AIDS crisis in Southern Africa and elsewhere. They welcomed the emphasis on gender and on the linkage between reproductive health and HIV/AIDS prevention, and concurred that food and nutrition should be a component of the strategy to fight HIV/AIDS. The lack or depletion of human resources resulting from the HIV/AIDS epidemic and the impact on the absorptive capacity of countries was underscored. The agencies agreed that innovative entry points were necessary to tackle the epidemic and that a results-based approach was essential.

VI. Millennium Development Goals in Nepal

26. The debate was based on the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals in Nepal, with presentations by representatives from the Government, the United Nations country team and an NGO.

27. Delegations stressed that the primary responsibility for mainstreaming the goals into operational activities and reporting lies with the country. They called on the United Nations to provide adequate support in that regard.

28. Delegations commented, asked questions or sought clarifications which included: (a) the consultation process; (b) the integration of the goals into the UNDAF, the 10-year development plan and Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP); (c) the relationship between the United Nations and the World Bank in development policy and in monitoring the goals; (d) the harmonization and coordination of activities among various donors in such sectors as capacity-building for data collection; (e) alignment of indicators and targets to reflect specific national situations; (f) the role of the United Nations system in conflict resolution; (g) the relationship between the United Nations and non-State actors; and (h) the costing of implementing the goals at national level.

29. The respondents said that comprehensive consultations had been conducted among parliamentarians, civil servants, special interest groups, women, different community entities and regions and the donor community. They spoke about the convergence in the design of strategies for the UNDAF and the goals. Objectives and outcomes in such areas as girls' education, provision of safe drinking water and reduction of child and maternal mortality had been clearly spelled out. The Millennium Development Goals had also been incorporated into the PRSP process and the United Nations team in Nepal had worked closely with the World Bank and other relevant stakeholders. The overall relationship between the United Nations and the World Bank at the global and national levels was good. A joint note by the heads of UNDP and the World Bank had been sent to all staff on their working relationship whose activities complement each other.

30. The indicators and targets had been realigned through extensive consultations, without losing the universality of the goals. The costing exercise was considered essential in determining how much was required to meet the targets. In the area of coordination and harmonization, donors were working together, for example, to build capacities for data collection and analysis and to enhance coherence, efficiency and effectiveness. Through decentralization, the UNDP governance programme had enhanced local communities' participation in the implementation of goals for education, with support from other United Nations agencies.

31. The panel said that on conflict, the Government and the United Nations system were working together to address the root causes. The United Nations had adopted a strategy and was strengthening its capacity in that area. Members of the Boards were informed that NGOs and other non-State actors were working closely with the government and the country team to publicize the Millennium Development Goals through advocacy messages. A national conference of NGOs had adopted a resolution on promoting awareness of the goals at all levels in the country.